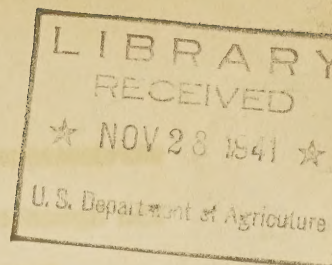


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United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.



REPORT OF CENTRAL STATES MARKETING EXTENSION CONFERENCE

Ames, Iowa, September 29 - October 1, 1941

This report is limited to the discussions of certain phases of extension work in marketing included in the program of the Central States Conference held at Ames, Iowa, September 29-October 1, 1941. The topics discussed were of current importance and included those that present the greatest need for unifying and strengthening existing extension work in marketing. This report may be used by each State extension service as a basis for evaluating these phases of the present marketing work and offer suggestions for further developing the program through regular program planning procedure to meet current problems in this field.

Definition of Field

The field of agricultural marketing is concerned with the services and functions of and the agencies involved in getting products from the farmer to the consumer and payments from the consumer back to the farmer. Many aspects of agricultural production such as quantity, quality, varieties, and seasonality as well as consumer incomes and preferences have a direct bearing on marketing.

The services and functions referred to include assembling, grading and standardizing, transporting, processing, packaging, financing, risk taking, storing, selling, and price making. "Agencies" is meant to include local buyers and dealers, cooperatives, wholesalers, jobbers,

warehousemen, commission men, processors, brokers, retailers, and public agencies performing marketing services and functions.

Extension marketing work is concerned with the dissemination of useful and practical marketing information to producers, consumers, and marketing agencies, along both functional and commodity lines, and at local, State, Regional, and National levels.

Objectives

Through the educational process -

1. Contribute to the solution of agricultural marketing problems, and help to bring about greater efficiency in the marketing and distributing processes.
2. Furnish interested groups and individual persons with information that will enable them to improve marketing systems, bring about and maintain equality of bargaining power, increase net farm income, and raise rural and urban living standards.
3. Assist in planning, coordinating, and conducting constructive marketing activities and programs sponsored by public agencies, general farm organizations, cooperative associations, consumer groups, trade associations, and others.
4. Aid in adjusting the production and marketing processes more nearly to meet domestic and foreign needs and demands.
5. Assist with the marketing phases of emergency situations and agricultural programs having to do with national welfare and defense.
6. Maintain consistently the ideal of serving toward attainment of the general welfare rather than to aid special interests.

Extension Personnel Relationships

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There is need for further unification of extension marketing programs and activities. This should be accomplished through the leadership of the marketing specialists and members of the supervisory staff, who will enlist the cooperation of other specialists in planning and carrying out the various phases of the work. Marketing specialists will be responsible for the economic phases of the programs. District supervisors and marketing specialists should assist county agents and local leaders in initiating and planning local and area marketing programs. To accomplish these ends in the long-time program the land-grant colleges should continue to provide adapted courses to meet the needs of prospective extension workers and in-service training for extension personnel. Opportunities should be provided and prospective extension workers and present staff members should be encouraged to avail themselves of such training.

Relationships to Farm Organizations and Cooperatives

The Extension Service should continue to cultivate working relationships with all farm and cooperative organizations as well as with other agencies working toward the improvement of marketing that are seeking or desiring assistance. Such assistance should be educational in nature, with the economic well-being of the farmer in the foreground, and all recommendations should be based on facts. This assistance can be most effective if participation begins early in the planning process and carries through as the program develops.

Use should be made of all educational devices in rendering assistance and stimulating interest in the problems. The democratic principles involved in sound cooperation should be emphasized. It should be recognized that cooperation with other organizations is a two-way proposition and that extension workers and the personnel of other agencies should learn from the contacts and experiences of each other. The Extension Service should not be responsible for making decisions involving operating policies, soliciting membership, or performing routine services that should be provided for on a commercial basis.

Relationships with Federal and State Agencies

The Extension Service has a responsibility to cooperate with all Federal and State agencies engaged in marketing work by developing and conducting educational programs dealing with the marketing activities of these agencies. Such educational programs should include the following:

1. Disseminate information concerning the objectives, methods of operation, and results of existing marketing programs to producers, consumers, processors, distributors, and others concerned.
2. Stimulate discussion among groups concerned so as to result in a more thorough understanding of the programs.
3. Encourage constructive appraisal of the implications of proposed programs and of alternative methods of attacking the problems involved, by the groups enumerated above and by state and county Agricultural Planning Committees.

It is emphasized that the action programs in marketing conducted by all Federal and State agencies should be developed by democratic processes. This should involve the active participation of farmers and others concerned in formulating the programs to secure the greatest adaptation possible to local conditions. The Extension Service should engage

in this phase of the marketing action programs by consulting and advising with representatives of the various agencies interested. It should also assist farmers and others concerned in understanding the problems and in analyzing and developing programs needed to solve them.

It is suggested that the county and state Agricultural Planning Committees can assist in guiding the development of marketing programs to better meet the needs of local people by outlining marketing problems that need solution and by bringing these problems to the attention of the appropriate Federal or State agency.

The Extension Service in the past has cooperated with Federal and State agencies in the marketing programs conducted by them and will continue and enlarge its activities in this regard as the need develops. It is emphasized that the participation of the Extension Service should be in an educational capacity in the broadest sense and that the actual operation of the programs should continue to be the responsibility of the action agencies themselves.

Educational Work With Consumers

The Extension Service should assume its responsibility in consumer education with reference to:

1. Recognition of the essentials of adequate nutrition and good "buy-manship."
2. Facilitating the movement of surplus products into consuming channels at seasonal peaks.
3. Recognition that a good buy for the consumer may constitute a good sale for the producer.

4. The development of a common yardstick in terms of information with respect to grades and labels, and the development of simplified grades and labels for consumer use.
5. Assisting consumers to appreciate the importance of a more efficient system of distribution extending from the farm to the consumer. This might logically result in narrower margins between prices producers receive and those the consumer pays for the essential services involved and/or provide a higher net return to the producer with greater values to the consumer.
6. Emphasizing the interdependence of producers and consumers in widely separated places in the exchange of products.
7. Further expansion of the activities of the Extension Service where feasible to reach urban consumers, but not losing sight of the fact that farm families are also consumers.

Marketing Research Related to Extension Needs

Lack of adequate research information is an important factor operating to restrict the character, scope, and effectiveness of extension education in marketing. Extension and research efforts should complement and supplement each other through collaboration in the formulation of research and extension programs. Extension specialists should continue to make short-time surveys and analyses of problems of a more localized or restricted nature, and research workers should deal with the more basic and technical aspects of the problems. More emphasis should be placed on technical training for marketing specialists and other extension personnel.

More effective research is needed to promote more effective extension teaching. The following considerations are suggested:

1. Making changes leading to greater efficiency in marketing and distributing farm products and in procuring farm supplies.
2. Promoting the evaluation and understanding of alternative price-making processes, of factors influencing prices and the formulation of sound price policies.
3. Aiding consumers of farm products to maximize value received for their food dollar and to understand factors contributing to high costs of distribution.
4. Evaluating the relative effectiveness of different systems and methods of marketing, alternative market outlets, grades and standards, quality price differentials and relationships, and costs as related to all of these factors.
5. Coordinated research on an area or regional basis is needed. Where the areas over which price and market forces operate are regional or national in scope the basic problems involved cannot be solved on a county or State basis.
6. Research and extension marketing specialists should cooperate in inventorying the types of research projects needed as a guide to future marketing programs.
7. More diagnosis type of research is needed to reveal problem areas and specific factors contributing to the problems.
8. Research projects should be chosen with due regard to the problems and needs of extension programs and should be flexible. Information should be released in the form best adapted to extension use.
9. Research should be done in extension teaching methods, organization for doing the work, and kinds of material best adapted to extension needs.

